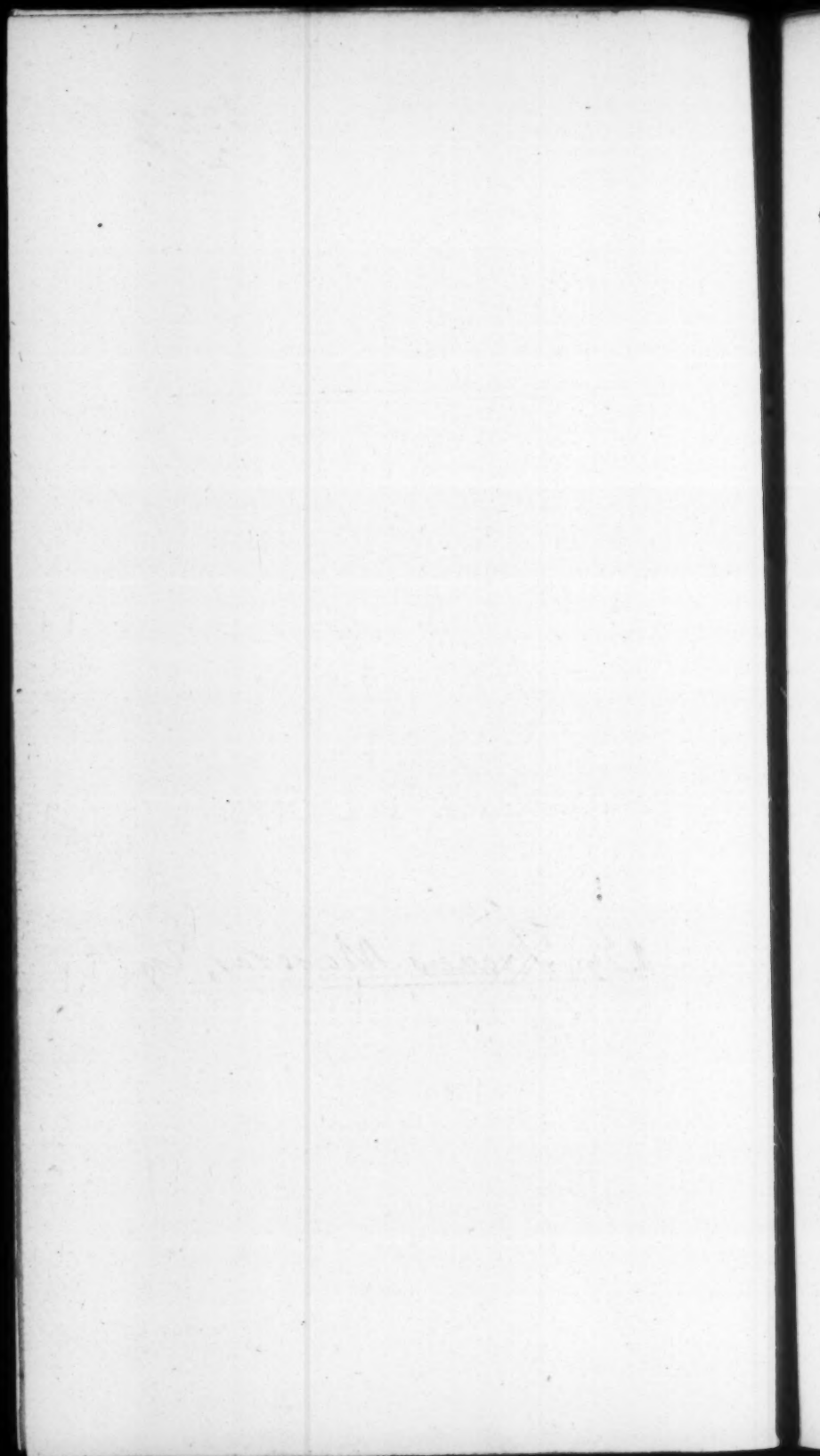

T R A N S L A T I O N

OF A PASSAGE IN A LATE PAMPHLET INTITLED

CORRESPONDANCE POLITIQUE.



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TRANSLATION

OF A PASSAGE IN A LATE PAMPHLET OF

MONSIEUR MALLET DU PAN,

INTITLED,

CORRESPONDANCE POLITIQUE.

CONTAINING

A Vindication of the late excellent KING of France,
LEWIS the XVIth, from a false and wicked Charge
brought against him by some of his Enemies.

By Francis Maseras, Esq.^r

L O N D O N:

SOLD BY BENJAMIN AND JOHN WHITE, IN FLEET-STREET.

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To the PRINTER of The GAZETTEER.

MR. PRINTER*,

June 11th, 1796.

I HAVE often heard it said, that the present unhappy war with France was entered-into by the King of Prussia and the Emperour of Germany, and with the consent of the late unfortunate King of France, Lewis the XVIth, in order to crush the rising liberties of France, and restore the former absolute monarchy. And this has been supposed to have been done in consequence of a certain Treaty of *Pilnitz* between the Emperour and the King of Prussia, concluded in the month of July, 1791, and at the instance and desire of the Court of Great Britain. Now all this I take to be totally false; and, on the contrary, I am persuaded that the French Nation were the aggressors, not only in the war with Great Britain and the late war with Spain, but in the war which still subsists against the Emperour; and I have no doubt that, if France had thought fit to continue at peace with all the nations of Europe, she might have continued so to this day, and that neither England, nor Spain, nor Prussia,

* This Letter was sent to the Editor of The Gazetteer: but he did not think fit to print it.

nor Austria, would have intermeddled in the smallest degree with her internal government, or in favour of a restoration of her former monarchy. Indeed no power of Europe would have dared to do so, if they had been so inclined; more especially as France was converted into a nation of soldiers from the very beginning of the revolution by the establishment of what they called their national guards: and, after the acceptance of the new constitution by the King of the French in September, 1791, there was no decent pretence left for any interference of a foreign power with respect to it, however ill-contrived, and injudicious, and little calculated to promote the happiness of the French people, that constitution might have been. This was a matter that chiefly concerned the French nation, and they seemed at that time very generally to approve their new constitution, and to be determined to support it; so that any endeavour from without to overturn it seemed likely to meet with the resistance of the whole nation, or a great majority of it, and consequently to prove ineffectual and ruinous to the powers that should undertake it. And, to prevent any such interference, the virtuous and prudent Lewis took care, on the very day he had signed his acceptance of this constitution, to dispatch instructions to his ministers at the several courts of Europe, to assure them of his perfect and sincere acquiescence in the new constitution, and of his desire that all the

powers of Europe would consider it as valid and binding; and lay aside all designs (if any such designs had been entertained by them,) of causing it to be rescinded, or altered, out of regard to him, or with a view to the restoration of his former authority. And, in consequence of these declarations of that good King, the Emperour of Germany did immediately order his ambassadours at several of the courts of Europe to declare "That, seeing that the King of the French had informed him that he had freely accepted the new constitution, and was desirous of maintaining it, the case of the Treaty of Pilnitz had not happened, and the said treaty was not to be carried into execution, but to be considered as of no force." This was about the month of November, 1791, as may be seen in Mr. *Nicholas Vansittart's* excellent answer to the pamphlet written in the spring of the year 1793 under the name of Mr. *Jasper Wilson*.

After these declarations of Lewis the XVIth and the Emperour of Germany, there seemed to be great reason to expect that no foreign war would be produced by the French revolution. Nor would any such war have been produced by it from the inclinations of any foreign power. But it was produced by a turbulent party in France itself, who thought it the most likely method they could take to bring about their own designs. This was the party of Monsieur *Brissot*, and Monsieur *Vergniaud*, and

Roland, and *Pethion*, and others, who wished to get rid of even the small remains of monarchical power that had been retained by the late Constituent Assembly in their new constitution of the government, and to abolish the very name of King and establish a pure republican government. Many of these persons were men of great abilities, and some of them had the reputation of men of virtue, and were, probably, so far honest men as not to act from views of self-aggrandisement : but they all seemed to think it lawful to use almost any means, however base and treacherous, and to involve their country in blood and slaughter, to bring-about what they thought a lawful and valuable end, such as that of the establishment of a free and pure republick without the least mixture of monarchical authority ; which was an end that they were the more anxious to obtain, because they apprehended that the smallest portion of that antient and respected power that should be permitted to continue in their new form of government, might become a seed from which a return of the former arbitrary and absolute monarchy might one day again sprout-up. With these opinions, and this loose system of morals on political subjects, they resolved to force the King into a declaration of war against the Emperour, under the pretence, (which had not the least appearance of probability,) that the Emperour was (notwithstanding his above-mentioned declarations to the contrary in November, 1791,) meditating
and

and preparing to make war upon the French nation, in order to destroy their new constitution, and restore the King to his former absolute authority. For they thought, that, if they could succeed in forcing the King, under these pretences, into such a war, they should afterwards have it in their power, by laying the blame of the miscarriages, that might happen in it, upon him, and imputing to him (in direct opposition to what they knew to be the truth,) a collusion with the Emperour and his Generals to favour their operations against France with a view to enable them to restore him by force of arms to his former absolute power;—I say, they thought that they should, by these means, be able to bring him into discredit with the people, and to make them consider him as a discontented and perfidious tyrant, who was secretly endeavouring, by the assistance of the publick enemy, to recover his lost arbitrary power. And, if they could succeed in thus raising the hatred of the people against the King by these calumnies, they thought it would be easy to induce the people to go a step further, and make an insurrection against him and dethrone him; which would open the way to the establishment of their favourite government under a pure republick. These were the views, and this was the conduct, of Brissot's, or the republican, party in France; and by this conduct, continued for about six months, namely, from October, 1791, to April, 1792, they forced the King

to dismiss the ministers of his own choice, *Monsieur de Lessart*, and others, and to take into office a new set of ministers recommended by the Jacobin club, namely, *Mr. Roland*, *Mr. Claviere*, and *Mr. Du Mouriez*, and others, and, in consequence of their unanimous advice, and in opposition to his own fixed opinion, to propose to the Legislative Assembly to declare war against the Emperour; and, then, after the war was declared, they proceeded to calumniate the King in the manner just now mentioned, and to charge him with being secretly governed by an *Austrian committee*, or private cabal of persons who were friends to the Austrians, and who favoured all their operations; and, by these calumnies, they, in about four months more, succeeded in exciting an insurrection of the people against him on the 10th of August, 1792, which ended in the murder of his faithful Swiss guards, and in his own imprisonment in the Temple. These things, Mr. Printer, are now no longer matter of conjecture: they have been acknowledged and boasted-of by *Monsieur Brissot* and other persons of the same party, as actions of high merit towards their country*. And yet we still, to my great surprise,

* A remarkable instance of this loose and strange morality is given us by the celebrated *Madame Roland* in her account of a project formed by *Monsieur Grangeneuve*, (one of her set of Republican Patriots,) to procure himself to be assassinated in his return from the Committee of Publick Safety at past ten o'clock at night to his own lodging, with a view to have the murder

prize, continue, every now and then, to hear some people talk of the treaty of Pilnitz, and the coalition of despots to overturn the liberties of France.

Now,

murder charged upon Lewis the XVIth. and thereby to raise such an indignation against him in the minds of the people of Paris as should be the cause of a general insurrection, with an immediate expulsion of him from the throne, and an abolition of monarchical government in France for ever after. The story is so remarkable that the reader will, I doubt not, be glad to hear it at large, as Madame Roland has related it ; and therefore I shall here insert the following translation of it.

“Monsieur *Grangeneuve* is one of the best men in the world, under an outward appearance that promises but little. His understanding is not above the common size ; but his heart is truly noble : he does the most courageous and generous actions without the least parade, or affectation ; and seems not to be sensible that he has done any thing extraordinary, or more than most other men would readily have done in the same circumstances.

“ In the course of the month of July, 1792, when the conduct and measures of the Court of Lewis the XVIth indicated some views that were hostile to publick liberty, the general conversation among patriots turned upon the means that ought to be employed to prevent or defeat those dangerous designs. Chabot, (who had formerly been a Capucin friar, but was now become a zealous promoter of the Revolution,) in talking of this subject one day with the warmth that proceeds from a heated imagination rather than from deliberate resolution, expressed a wish, “ that the Court would make some attempt upon the lives of some of the most patriotic members of the Legislative Assembly ; for that such an attempt would infallibly produce a general insurrection of the people against the King, and was the only

Now, Mr. Printer, I have lately met with a very authentic and curious passage relating to this subject

means of rousing them to a sense of the danger in which the cause of liberty was now involved, and thereby bringing on a convulsion that would be salutary to it." He dwelt long upon this idea, and took great pains to convince the company of its importance. *Grangeneuve*, who was one of the small company to whom this discourse was addressed, listened to him with great attention, but without saying a word upon the subject all the time that *Chabot* was speaking; but some little time after, when he had an opportunity of being alone with *Chabot*, he told him, "He had been very much struck with the idea which he had started, and was perfectly satisfied with the reasons he had alleged in support of his opinion; but added, that he was persuaded that the King and his friends were much too wise and cautious in their measures to adopt a scheme which would afford their enemies so just a ground for exciting the people against them:—that therefore it became necessary that the patriots should themselves bring about this useful event, which the Court would certainly not venture upon. Do you therefore find proper persons to commit the murder; and I will consent to be the person murdered." *Chabot* was surprized at this proposal, and desired to know whether he meant it seriously. To which *Grangeneuve* made answer, "Most undoubtedly; nor ought you to be so much surprized. For what is there in the proposal so very strange or difficult? My life is not of much use to the world; my existence is not of importance: and I should be very happy to give it up to procure such a benefit to my country." *Chabot*, upon receiving this answer, seemed to be inspired with the same spirit of patriotism that had suggested it, and replied, "Oh! my friend, since this is your noble resolution, I am determined to share the glory of it with you. We will both die in the great cause." *Grangeneuve* said calmly, "The loss of one life would answer the purpose; but two will certainly do better.

However,

ject in a pamphlet lately published by Mr. *Mallet de Pan*, who is a writer of great note and well acquainted

However, there will be no glory gained by it, because it must be kept a profound secret from every body, that we have been the contrivers of this event. But now, since you approve of the scheme, let us think of the means of carrying it into execution." Chabot, upon this, undertook to provide proper persons to execute the scheme, and, a few days after, informed Grangeneuve that he had done so, and that every thing was now ready for the execution of their plan. "Well!" said Grangeneuve, *let us then appoint the time of it without further delay. We will go to the Committee of Publick Safety to-morrow night: and I will leave it at half an hour after ten o'clock to return to my Lodging. It will be proper that we should go through such a street, which is but little frequented, and therefore is fitter for a business of this kind than the streets through which we usually go; and there you must give directions to your operators to wait for us. But I beg you would exhort them to take care to do their business dexterously, by taking good aim at us, so that they may dispatch us quickly, and not mangle us."*

"Chabot agrees to this proposal of Grangeneuve, and promises to give the necessary directions; and Grangeneuve goes home to his lodging, makes his will, and settles some domestick affairs with great tranquillity and privacy, and so as to give no reason for suspecting his design, and then keeps his appointment by resorting to the Committee of Publick Safety at the time that had been agreed-on. But when he came there, he did not find Chabot; but he continued in the room in hopes of seeing him come in, till the hour at which it was agreed they should leave it to return home: and then, finding that Chabot was still absent, he concluded that Chabot had determined to give up his share of the honour of this project; but, as Chabot had given him no notice to the contrary, he supposed that it was still his intention that the project should be executed with respect to Grangeneuve himself,

quainted with the affairs of France. The pamphlet is intitled, *Correspondance Politique, pour servir à l'Histoire*

himself, who had first proposed it. He accordingly left the Committee of Publick Safety at the appointed hour, and went towards his lodging through the street that had been agreed on, and walked through it as slowly as possible, to give the men, who were to kill him, an opportunity of meeting him: but, to his great surprize, he met with nobody; upon which, fearing some mistake might have been made as to the time that had been mentioned to them, he walked back again through the same street at a slow pace, to give them a further chance of meeting with him; and then again he went through it a third time in his way to his lodging, where at last he arrived alive and unhurt, and much vexed at the failure of the execution of the project, which, he had hoped, would have been of so much benefit to his country. Chabot afterwards endeavoured to defend himself against the reproaches and ridicule of his friends for his conduct on this occasion, by some shuffling and paltry excuses that nobody paid any regard to: and he was thought by all the patriots to have acted in the whole business agreeably to the character that belonged to his former habits of life, namely, with the cowardice of a priest and the hypocrisy of a Capucin friar."

See *Appel à l'impartiale Postérité, par la Citoyenne Roland*, page 156.

This is *Madame Roland's* account of this transaction, in which there is not the smallest intimation of her disliking, or disapproving, this project, which (though it shewed great courage in *Grangeneuve*, and a thorough devotion to the cause of Republicanism, or what he called Liberty,) was one of the blackest acts of calumny and perfidy that can well be conceived. But it serves to shew how far political enthusiasm (as well as religious,) will sometimes corrupt and pervert men's notions of the plainest moral

l'Histoire du Republicanisme François, and may be had at Mr. *De Boffe's*, the French bookseller in Gerard-street. The whole of this pamphlet is full of just and useful reflections : but the passage I allude to is, I think, more particularly fit to be perused by all those who wish to know the truth on this subject ; and therefore, as it is not a very long one, I have taken the trouble of translating it into English, with such explanations as seemed necessary to make it be more easily understood by English readers ; and I herewith send you the translation of it to be inserted in your useful paper, of which I am

A CONSTANT READER.

P. S. I would not, however, have you think me a favourer of the continuance of the present war, though it was not sought for by us, but made upon us by the French nation under the influence of Mr. Brissot and his party. For I allow it to be a dreadful calamity, that will probably bring on a national bankruptcy, if it is not speedily put an end

moral duties. The enthusiasm of the Papists concerned in the Gun-powder Treason Plot, which made them think it an innocent and laudable action to destroy at one stroke the King, Lords, and Commons of England, (the whole Legislature of their country,) by means of gun-powder, of which *Garnet* the Jesuit, who was hanged for it, boasted in his last dying speech, is hardly a stronger instance of the power of enthusiasm in perverting men's ideas of morality.

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to. And therefore I long for a peace upon the most moderate terms, and would readily consent to the restoration of all the places we have taken from the Dutch to obtain one, and this, even though we could not procure the restoration of the former Dutch government, nor recover for the Emperour the Austrian Netherlands, which are, nevertheless, points most ardently to be wished for : but necessity has no law. But, in requesting you to publish this translation of this passage of Mr. *Mallet du Pan*, my only motive is a desire of causing justice to be done to the memory of that *most upright and benevolent monarch*, the late King, Lewis the XVIth.

A TRANSLATION of a Note in a late publication of Monsieur Mallet du Pan, intitled, *Correspondance Politique, containing a Vindication of the late excellent King of France, Lewis the XVIth, from the false and wicked charge of having involved his country in a war with the Emperour of Germany and the King of Prussia in the month of April, 1792, with a view of furnishing them with an opportunity of interfering with the internal government of France, and restoring him to his former absolute power.* See *Correspondance Politique*, page lxix, note D.

THE blame of the present unhappy war (which has brought greater distress upon France than all the wars of the six last reigns put together,) ought to fall upon the following sets of men; to wit, 1st, upon the members of the second National Assembly, (that met in October, 1791,) sent from the district of *La Gironde*, and known by the name of the *Girondist party*, who vehemently called for it in their speeches to the said Assembly; and, 2dly, upon the majority of the said National Assembly, or (as it is often called, to distinguish it from the first, or *Constituent*, Assembly,) the *Legislative Assembly*, who, through a cowardly fear of the Jacobin Society and the mob of Paris, voted for the war without really approving

proving it ; and, 3dly, upon the Brissotin, or Jacobin, Ministers of State, whom the King was compelled to take into office, to wit, Mr. *Roland*, Mr. *Claviere*, and Mr. *Du Mouriez*, (who became afterwards so famous as a General, and conquered all the Austrian Netherlands in one winter,) and their colleagues, who, by an unanimous recommendation of the measure of declaring war against the Emperor of Germany, reduced the King to the necessity of consenting to it.

The unhappy King, when he signed this declaration of war, did it with tears in his eyes, conceiving that it would prove (as it has done,) the beginning and occasion of innumerable mischiefs to his country. All those persons who were present in the National Assembly when he came there to inform them of the resolution that had been taken by his Council, may remember the marks of deep affliction and melancholy that were observed on that occasion both in his countenance and in the tone of his voice. And, before he was brought to comply with this unanimous advice of all the strange ministers that then composed his Privy Council, (which advice was directly contrary to his own opinion,) he insisted that each of them should set his name to it ; which was accordingly done. And the King afterwards carefully preserved the paper they had signed, as a testimony that the war had not been of his seeking. And, if

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I am not mistaken, this paper must now be in the hands of Mr. *Morris*, who was at that time the Envoy of the New United States of North America at the French Court, and whom I have already had occasion to mention above in page xxix.

Lewis the XVIth looked upon this war as likely to bring-on his own destruction and that of all his family, and the ruin of monarchical government in France, and even that of the French nation itself, as far as a whole nation is capable of being ruined. And he knew that the design of the Brissotine faction, in thus urging-on the war, was to get rid of the remnant of monarchy that had been admitted into the late constitution of France, which had been framed by the first, or Constituent, Assembly in the year 1791, and accepted by him in the month of September in that year. That faction, he well knew, wished for the war, in order to have an opportunity of throwing the blame of the miscarriages that might happen in it, upon him, and of charging him with favouring the cause of the Austrians, from a hope that the Emperour might, by the success of his arms, overturn the new government of France, and restore the King to the power he had enjoyed under the old one. These charges were accordingly afterwards brought against him, and Mr. Brissot and his followers were eternally talking and writing about a supposed *Austrian Committee* (or private advisers

advisers of the King, that were friendly to the interests of Austria,) that directed all the measures of the Court, and were colluding with the Emperour and his Generals, in order to favour and facilitate their invasion of France; in the hope of bringing about a restoration of the former absolute government. These charges were intended to irritate the people of France, and more especially the people of Paris, against the King, and to make them think that the degree of liberty which they fancied themselves to have acquired by their new constitution of 1791, could not be preserved without dethroning the King, and converting the late limited monarchical form of government into a pure and absolute republick; which was the kind of government which that faction most ardently wished to see established, but which the first, or Constituent, National Assembly could not, in the year 1791, be persuaded to adopt. These wicked arts of Monsieur Brissot and his faction were, unfortunately, too successful, and brought on the insurrection of the people of Paris against the King on the 10th of August, 1792, the attack of the castle of the *Tuilleries*, (in which the King then resided,) the murder of the Swiss guards, the imprisonment of the King in *the Temple*, the calling of the National Convention in September, 1792, and the immediate abolition of monarchy and establishment of a pure republick in France, agreeably to the wishes of Monsieur Brissot and his party. And this was afterwards

afterwards acknowledged by that party-leader and his friends to have been their design in urging-on the war against the Emperour; and they even boasted of this conduct, both as being *patriotick*, from the glorious object they had in view, "*that of establishing a pure republican government,*" and as being *wise*, from the adoption of the only measures by which that glorious object could have been accomplished. Of such patriotism and such wisdom the people of France have ever since been enjoying the blessed consequences.

These designs of Monsieur Brissot and his party did not escape the observation of Lewis the XVIth. He knew them well, and dreaded the success of them; and, to counteract them as far as he was able, he was anxiously desirous that the war against the Emperour (which he had so reluctantly been drawn to consent to,) should be considered by all parties as only a common war between two independent powers, and not as a war that had any relation to the late change in the government of France; and he earnestly hoped that the Allied Powers against whom it was declared, namely, the Emperour of Germany and the King of Prussia, would consider it only in the former light, and not presume, in the course of it, to interfere in the smallest degree with the internal government of France, or the right of the Legislature of the French nation to settle that government in the

manner they thought proper. And this was the very substance and purport of the instructions he did me the honour to give me in the month of May, 1792, and which he commanded me to communicate to the prime ministers of the Emperour and the King of Prussia, (who were then, both of them, at Franckfort, on account of the approaching coronation of the Emperour,) and to use my most earnest endeavours to prevail upon those ministers to adopt them. So different was the real conduct of that upright and benevolent monarch from that which his enemies imputed to him, and which too many persons in foreign countries, from want of information and from a disposition to give credit to the malicious and impudent misrepresentations of his enemies, have been induced to suppose it. For surely no man's character was ever so little understood, so foolishly judged-of, and so unworthily and unjustly traduced, as his has been, by many rash and ill-informed persons, in several different countries of Europe!

If the five members of the present Directory of France (who restrain the liberty of the press there in a far greater degree than any of their former absolute monarchs ever dared to do, and who break open, without the least scruple, all letters sent by the post, and intercept and suppress all means of giving the people of France true informations on

publick and political subjects,) should permit this little tract of mine to be circulated in their republick, the nation will there see to what persons they ought to attribute the calamities they have so long laboured under, and will then lament, in floods of unavailing tears, the fate of the good monarch whom they have permitted to be murdered among them, and who, they will now find, was, of all the men who have taken a part in the conduct of their affairs for the last seven years, the only one that could justly be entitled *the people's friend*.

A few days before I left Paris to go to Franckfort with the above-mentioned commission from the King, the Count *de Montmorin* (who knew the errand I was going upon,) had a private and very free conversation with me, in which he laid open to me his opinions and apprehensions concerning the light in which, it was probable, the war would be viewed by many people, and the dreadful events to which it would give rise. And I now declare that this minister described to me, on this occasion, distinctly, and in their order, the several grand events that would result from the war, and the several lines of conduct which the different powers concerned in it would pursue, in a manner that was afterwards so well confirmed by the events that did really take place, that one might almost think he had been endowed with the gift of prophecy.

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If any one shall say that I originally approved of the conduct of the French nation in entering into this war, and that I did not foresee, or foretell, any of the disastrous consequences of it, but am now, through vanity, (after the calamitous events produced by it have given me, and every body else, too much reason to censure it,) affecting to have blamed it from the beginning, and to have foreseen the dreadful effects it would produce, I could, in answer to such a charge, produce more than thirty passages from some of my writings published at the time, by which it would appear, that I held the same language concerning this destructive war at the time the French nation first engaged in it, as I do at this day. One of these passages was published on the 7th of January, 1792, that is, three months before the war was declared, and was in these words: “ I have said
 “ already, and shall never cease to repeat it, (and
 “ I am persuaded that the experience of a very
 “ short time will, if the war is engaged-in, con-
 “ firm the truth of what I advance,) that, if we
 “ engage in this war, one consequence of it will be
 “ a completion of the ruin of the French monarchy,
 “ (which is already much impaired and weakened,)
 “ and an exchange of it for a state of slavery, &c.”